

Hunger in Kenya

2 ZERO HUNGER



Hunger trends in Kenya based on the 2015 Global Hunger Index [GHI]

- Global Hunger Index score **24** [Level: Serious]
- Proportion of undernourished in population **21.2%**
- Prevalence of wasting in children under five years **4%**
- Prevalence of stunting in children under five years **26%**
- Under five mortality rate **7.1%**

In Kenya, the Government, through the office of the President and the Ministry of Agriculture, is responsible for ensuring food security for its citizens. Food insecurity is a serious issue in Kenya; an estimated 1.6 million people suffer from chronic hunger, 46% of the population lives under the poverty line and around 16 million people lack sufficient food. The Government, international organizations, NGOs and CBOs are addressing food security.

Agricultural sector in Kenya

The Agricultural sector is responsible for approximately 25% of Kenya's GDP. Around 75% of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, mainly smallholder subsistence farmers. Women account for 75% of the labour in the agricultural sector.

How the agricultural sector contributes to food insecurity:

- Focus on cash crops [flowers, tea, coffee and horticultural produce] for export.
- Small landholdings mean low productivity and limited access to inputs, financial services as well as markets for surplus produce.
- Overreliance on synthetic fertilizers lowers soil fertility and in turn decreases productivity.



Factors that contribute to food insecurity and hunger

Climate change

Agriculture in Kenya is heavily dependent on rainfall. Unpredictable rain patterns have led to floods and droughts which impact negatively on the country's food production resulting in chronic food shortages.

Poverty

Poverty results in low purchasing power, those who live in poverty cannot afford to buy food despite its availability. The majority of the people who live in urban slums are hungry due to poverty.

International market systems

Kenya has to import maize, wheat and rice due to low local production. International market systems influence the prices of food commodities eg the 2007-2008 world food price crisis.

Policies and programmes

Structural Adjustment Programmes [SAPs], Kenyan policies on agriculture and Food Aid programs have created a food dependency syndrome.

Geographical location

The North Eastern parts of Kenya are mainly arid and semi-arid areas. Kenyans who live in arid-semi arid areas are more prone to droughts and food insecurity.

References

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Strategies to alleviate hunger

- Kenya Food Security Steering Group, comprising of the Government, UN and NGOs
- Foreign aid programs such as USAID, World Food Programme <http://www.wfp.org>
- NGO's work on building resilience and supporting farmers eg A Rocha Kenya – Conservation Agriculture <http://www.arocha.or.ke/farming-gods-way/>, The SNV Kenya Market-led Dairy Program [KMDP] <http://www.snv.org/project/kenya-market-led-dairy-programme>
- School Feeding Programmes – Ministry of Education, Kenya Home Grown School Feeding [HGSF] Programme <http://hgsf-global.org/kenya/>
- Government policies – supply-related policies, price-related policies and income related policies
- Vision 2030 [Kenya's development plan], the Government has identified 7 flagship programs to promote food security